



PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT



AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

United States Department of Agriculture • 1400 Independence Ave., SW • Room 3510-S
Washington, DC 20250 • (202) 720-8998 • World Wide Web: <http://www.ams.usda.gov>

Release No. 068-02

Jessica E. Faust (202) 720-8998
jessica.faust@usda.gov
Billy Cox (202) 720-8998
billy.cox@usda.gov

USDA ANNOUNCES JAPANESE RECOGNITION OF U.S. ORGANIC STANDARDS FOR PLANT-BASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

WASHINGTON, March 27, 2002—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced that the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries has officially recognized that USDA's national organic standards for the production, handling and processing of plant-based organic agricultural products meet the requirements of the Japanese Agricultural Standards.

This official recognition means that plant-based agricultural products from United States operations certified as meeting U.S. organic standards may be labeled or represented in Japan as organic. The recognition agreement does stipulate, however, that alkali-extracted humic acid, lignin sulfonate and potassium bicarbonate, may not be used in raw or processed organic food exported to Japan. These substances are allowed under the U.S. organic standards.

The recognition agreement replaces and expands upon a temporary agreement that allows U.S. plant-based organic food ingredients to be exported to Japan and sold as organic. The temporary agreement expires March 31, 2002.

This announcement will allow U.S. producers to make greater inroads into Japan's approximately \$1 billion-a-year organic food market.

USDA's national organic standards will be fully implemented by Oct. 21, and all producers, handlers and processors of organic agricultural products, both foreign and domestic must meet these standards in order to label their products organic. On this date, consumers will start seeing the USDA Organic Seal on products on supermarket shelves. Further details regarding the Japanese recognition of USDA organic standards and other organic issues are available at www.ams.usda.gov/nop.

#